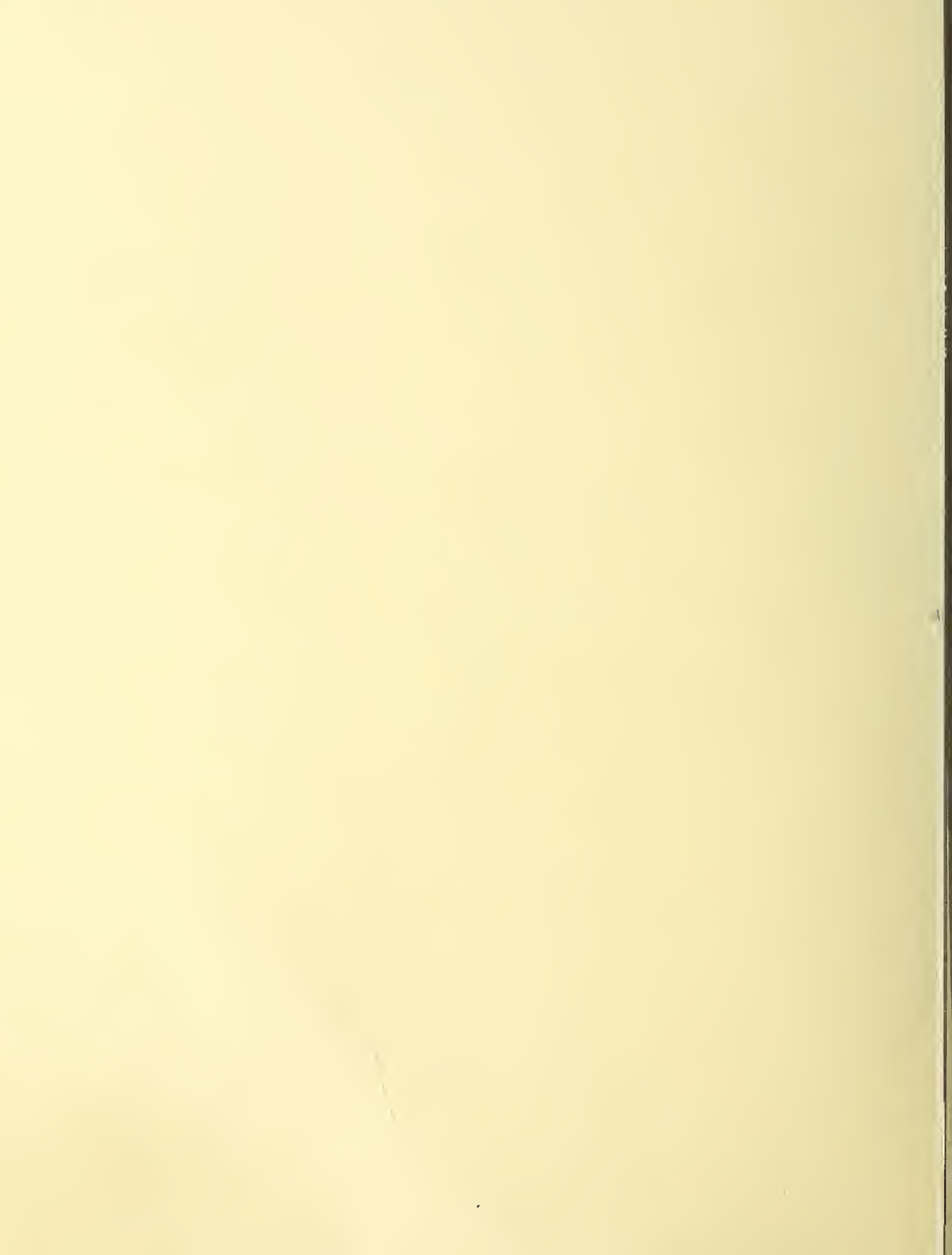


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3 SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING*

The Characteristics of a Learning Organism

1. The learner is a behaving organism. Activity is primary and continuous.
2. The learner is a goal seeking organism. Activity is directed toward and controlled by purposes. The remote general purpose is to restore and maintain equilibrium and comfort.
3. The learner reacts to whole situations or total patterns and not to isolated or abstracted parts thereof.
4. The learner reacts as a whole. He reacts all over, intellectual, emotional, and physical reaction being simultaneous.
5. The learner reacts in a unified way. Unless interference occurs, his total reaction, intellectual, emotional, physical, is coordinated and integrating toward achievement of purpose.

The Characteristics of Learning Processes and Products

General definition. Learning is the process of acquiring useful responses and controls of response through experiencing them.

1. The learning process is experiencing, reacting, doing, undergoing. Scores of different learning activities are utilized.
2. The learning products are responses and controls of response, values, understanding, attitudes, appreciations, special abilities, skills.
3. The learning process proceeds best when the numerous and varied activities are unified around a central core of purpose, when the learner's interest is in the activities and products, when the learner identifies himself with the purpose through originating or accepting it.
4. The learning products accepted by the learner are those which satisfy a need, which are useful and meaningful. Learning products which are extraneous to need and purpose are either rejected or learned only superficially. (Actually they are not truly learned at all.)
5. The learning process proceeds and the learner grows through continuous individuation of new patterns out of original wholes and the reintegration of new wholes into the total personality pattern.
6. The learning products are perfected through a series of discrete, identifiable experiences. The number of experiences necessary for the production of a change in the learning organism will vary from one to a great number depending upon: the type of learning, the adjustment between difficulty of learning and maturity of the learner, the relativity of the learning situation to the life of the learner, the speed with which insight develops, and many other factors.
7. The process of organization implied in 5 and 6 may be slow and gradual, or relatively rapid, or sudden. Good learning situations will stimulate continuous changes in the pattern of response toward an ever better organization. The better organized into systems the learning experiences are, the less likely they will be forgotten. Isolated and fragmentary items are soon forgotten.

* Summary from Burton, William H. The Guidance of Learning Activities, D. Appleton-Century Company.- Prepared by J. N. Raudabaugh, FES
ER&T-203(9-55)

8. The learning products, when properly acquired, are complex and adaptable, not simple and static. They are transposable from situation to situation, or more simply, there is transfer of training.
9. The learning experiences, to be of maximum value, must possess lifelikeness for the learner. They must satisfy a current purpose, be continuous with ongoing experience, and be interactive with a wide and rich environment.
10. The learning experience, initiated by need and purpose, is likely to be motivated continuously by its own incompleteness. Further stimulation through subsidiary purposes suggested by the teacher may be necessary.
11. The learning process and its products are conditioned by heredity and environment. Heredity factors: a plastic nervous system, glandular balance, chemical composition and secretions, the various physiological systems, organic drives, etc. Environmental factors are: the cultural heritage, the mores, customs and institutions of society, pressures of many kinds, economic status, informal educational influences, the school system, etc.
12. The learning process and its products are affected by the level of maturity of the learner as indicated by various measures of chronological, mental emotional, physiological, and social age; by the nature and amount of previous experience as indicated by tests of informational background, interests, needs; by fatigue, etc.
13. The influence of previous experience upon learning is regarded quite differently by the two major schools. The associationists stress its importance and note the value of knowing the learner's background of experience. The principle of "apperception" is important. The field-theory group places more emphasis upon the clarity and organization of the field or pattern, upon subsequent differentiation through insight. The sensible view would seem to be that both emphases are important.
14. The presence of many errors in a learning experience is usually though not always an indication that the experience is too difficult for the learner's level of maturity. Better pacing is needed.
15. The learning process and the acquisition of products are materially affected by individual differences among the learners.
16. The learning process proceeds best when the learner has knowledge of his status and progress. The satisfaction accruing from success, from challenge to overcome difficulties, and to rectify failure definitely aids learning. Failure imposed by others, or by arbitrary standards beyond the control of the learner, is not an educative situation.
17. The learning process is unified functionally, but distinguishable types of learning may be separated for discussion: perceptual, sensori-motor, memoriter, problem-solving or conceptual, affective.
18. The learning products are interrelated functionally but may be listed separately for discussion. Values, understandings, attitudes, appreciation, abilities, and skills are all interrelated in any one given learning product possessed by the learner.
19. The learning process proceeds more effectively under that type of teaching which guides and stimulates without dominating or coercing.

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The Characteristics of the Teaching Process

General definition. Teaching is the guidance of the natural activities of the learner, and the stimulation of desired activities, directing them through educative experiences to the acquisition of socially desirable controls of conduct.

1. The teacher will aid pupils in defining their purposes; set the stage for the emergence of desirable purposes.
2. The teacher will aid pupils in distinguishing between levels and types of purposes; will aid them to choose those leading to outcomes deemed desirable by our civilization.
3. The teacher will guide or direct (sometimes) pupils in planning procedures for the achievement of their purposes. That is, she will guide or direct learners into experiences possessing maximum lifelikeness, which satisfy the selected purpose, which are continuous and interactive. Direct experiences will perforce be supplemented by vicarious experiences which should be as vivid as possible.
4. The teacher will guide pupils in a sufficient number of these experiences to guarantee, as far as it ever can be guaranteed, the acquisition of desired outcomes.
5. The teacher will guide pupils into, or will provide for numerous and diverse learning activities. That is, she will provide for response from the whole organism.
6. The teacher will aid pupils in selecting experiences fitted to their abilities, needs, interests, and levels of maturity. That is, she will adapt learning experiences to individual differences among the learners.
7. The teacher will aid pupils in discovering how to judge their own progress, and will encourage the constant self-evaluation of status and progress.

